

7 Aug 67

The Honorable William Leonhart

Mr. Daniel P. Cleksiw

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Attack on the Viet Cong Infrastructure

Attached for your information is the first cut at a memorandum on our ever-all attack on the VC infrastructure and the role that can be played therein by the new ICEX organization. This is the memorandum circulated at the 4 August Vietnam Committee meeting. I regret that I did not bring enough copies to the meeting to provide you with yours.

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Attachment

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SUBJECT: Attack on Viet Cong Infrastructure: The Infrastructure Intelligence Coordination and Exploitation Structure (ICEX).

1. The Viet Cong "Infrastructure" is the enemy's political and administrative organization which organizes, develops and directs the insurgency in South Vietnam. In VC "safe" areas, the VC openly administers and governs; in "contested" areas it functions semi-clandestinely, maintaining and exercising its authority at night time, but evading the consideration of GVN forces; in GVN-controlled areas, the infrastructure functions completely conspiratorially, performing espionage, sabotage, terrorism and so on. It is in the ability of key members of the VC organization to evade capture by hiding among the population, or by coming and hiding out only to return at a later date, which is responsible for the Viet Cong resiliency -- the ability to regroup, rebuild and re-infiltrate, even after military operations have apparently cleared an area of the Viet Cong.

2. This "Infrastructure" is composed of the People's Revolutionary Party (PRP) (Communist Party) cadre and officers of the so-called National Liberation Front for South Vietnam. We also include as "Infrastructure" the people who work full time in the Viet Cong bureaucracy. The PRP membership is organized in Party Committees, from the Central Office of South Vietnam (COSVN, the central headquarters of the insurrection) through region, province, district, to village level. In hamlets there are Party cells. The National Liberation Front also possesses a structure from its national headquarters, through region, province and district, to villages and hamlets. PRP members occupy key positions in the various National Liberation Front organizations, at each echelon. Each level of the Communist political command structure (COSVN, Region Committee, Province Committee, District Committee and Village Committee) possesses a staff bureaucracy which is organized functionally. Each possesses, for example, a Current Affairs Section (the executive secretariat and the command organ), a Security Section, a Finance-Economy Section, a

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Postal Transport and Communications Section, a Military Affairs Section, and so on. These sections organize and direct such activities as political organization, recruitment, propaganda, tax and food collection, local administration, terrorism, et cetera.

3. The Viet Cong regional and provincial echelons reside in relatively secure (from a Viet Cong standpoint) base areas; their District Committees are however more exposed, as are their Village Party Committees and Chapters. All are mobile. They often conduct operations from their base areas into contested and government-controlled territory, either augmenting or drawing support from the local, covert, in-place elements.

4. In contested and GVN-controlled areas, attack on the VC infrastructure is essentially a police-type operation. It depends on precise identification of cadre (both PRP and NLF), determination of their locations and patterns of their activities and movements, and then the generation of operations to capture or destroy them.

5. Intelligence information on VC infrastructure is developed from a number of collection programs. Province and District Police Special Branch run informant operations into the villages and hamlets. The Static Census Grievance Program runs informant sources, similar and complementary to the Police Special Branch hamlet informant program, and also systematically develops information from hamlet residents. District Chiefs, Military Security Service (MSS), Sector S-2, also run informant nets. Revolutionary Development Teams develop a considerable amount of informant-type information.

6. The Police Special Branch, the MSS, Sector S-2, and the Central Intelligence Organization run agent penetrations into the VC apparatus at village, district and sometimes province level (higher level penetrations have proven exceptionally difficult to achieve).

7. Provincial Police Special Branch units operate Province Interrogation Centers (now functioning in 33 of the 44 provinces in Vietnam) for interrogation on infrastructure of VC arrestees and prisoners. ARVN Sector S-2 as well as tactical units conduct interrogations. Defectors (Hol Chan) are interrogated by the police, by the military, and other units.

8. Captured documents are exploited locally, and also centrally.

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at the Combined Documents Exploitation Center in Saigon.

9. Positive and aggressive actions must be taken to arrest, capture, or destroy the VC cadre. This action can take a variety of forms, depending on the action "tools" most suitable for the particular targets. Police can arrest and interrogate, if the targets are within an area where the police can operate. The police, RF/PF, or Province Reconnaissance Units (PRU) can lay an ambush or can conduct a raid, for the purpose of capturing or killing the targets. PRU units will operate into contested areas and into VC-controlled areas to ambush and kidnap targeted VC cadre, and to break up and kidnap the personnel at hamlet, village and district meetings and conferences. For important, concentrated targets, such as, for example, a reliably reported conference of VC Province Committee cadre, the generation of a larger scale operation involving ARVN forces or Free World Military Assistance Forces will be necessary. Air and artillery strikes are also suitable against Province or Region Committee headquarters areas, conferences, and so on. Conventional military operations will also from time to time be undertaken against the VC headquarters areas, disrupting their communications, seizing or destroying their files and records, and capturing, killing or dispersing their cadre. Combined police/military operations may be undertaken; the cordon and search operation wherein the military seal off an area and the police then conduct a systematic search, using black lists (developed from all available intelligence) and other aids in ferreting out VC hidden among the population, is an effective technique in degrading the infrastructure and its supporting guerrilla and logistics capability.

10. Whereas all of the above effort is directed at identifying and destroying (capturing or killing) the infrastructure, not much durable success can be achieved as long as captured Viet Cong cannot be properly imprisoned and neutralized. Large numbers of VC are captured or arrested, but many escape, are given too-short prison terms, or buy their way out. The prison system in Vietnam (apart from the POW system) is totally inadequate. Due to the complexity of the many problems involved in screening, judicial processing and imprisonment of Viet Cong, a U.S. Mission approach to this problem has been undertaken.

11. The intelligence/action attack against the infrastructure is unfortunately characterized by the multiplicity of agencies and organizations, military and civilian, American and Vietnamese, conducting intelligence collection, and by multiplicity and lack of coordination of the "action" tools

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available. A "Roles and Missions Study Group" of the Mission (which undertook a detailed study of the entire U.S. effort in summer 1966) observed that, rather than increasing the flow of raw intelligence information, it was more important to organize and to utilize much more effectively that intelligence information which was already available, i.e., the flow of information already exceeded the capability to organize and react to information. The Study Group report called for more effective coordination, collation, analysis, dissemination and reaction to already available inputs.

12. The newly created Infrastructure Collection and Exploitation Staff (ICEX) and related staff elements extending to Corps and Sector (province) is a staff and managerial structure designed to marry the efforts of all civilian and military components engaged in intelligence collection on the hamlet, village and district infrastructure into one single, concerted effort; to stimulate, generate, coordinate and expand positive action operations, based on this intelligence information, to eliminate and destroy this infrastructure; and to solve the physical and judicial problems involved in permanent neutralization of captured Viet Cong.

13. At risk of some repetition, four major problem areas are outstanding:

a. There are many different agencies and components (American and Vietnamese) engaged in intelligence collection on the infrastructure. These many activities are unrelated and often uncoordinated. Efforts and resources are often dissipated, and frequently competitive. Integrated planning is non-existent (particularly at Sector level, where it is most important). Absence of coordination implies many partial, piecemeal efforts, inadequate application of available resources, and so on.

b. Equally, on the action side, there are many different elements, responsive to different chains of command, engaged in the effort to apprehend or destroy VC. These include National Police, Police Field Forces, PRU, RD Teams, RF/PF, ARVN and FWMAF, and so on. Once again, a principal requirement exists for an integrated approach, integrated planning, and proper coordination.

c. A third major problem is that of intelligence and other types of provincial reporting. Intelligence dissemination

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practices vary widely. Each element and agency in province reports differently, and reports a different part of the problem. In so doing, there is a large degree of overlap. One result is, that while it is unsound to depend on the reporting of any single agency on one given topic, for example, it turns out to be near impossible to reconcile the reports of several agencies. Furthermore, large amounts of key information may not be available at all. The above, however, represents only two aspects of the dissemination and reporting problems in Vietnam; there are a number of other problems and difficulties.

d. A fourth major problem is that the Vietnamese system is even more fragmented, inchoate and uncoordinated than the American effort. All of the ills on the American side are compounded, and are then overlaid with peculiarly Vietnamese additions. One specific problem in this area is mistrust, contempt, lack of coordination, and so on existing between ARVN and the police, so that ARVN has a general tendency to ignore and denigrate police intelligence production. Critical need therefore exists for identifying such ills and adopting a concerted and coordinated American approach to them.

14. The ICEX Staff and managerial structure (both Saigon and field), is designed to respond to the above problems.

15. An ICEX Committee, for coordination and decision-making, has been established in Saigon under the chairmanship of Deputy for CORDS to COMUSMACV. This committee at the present time includes the Special Assistant to the Ambassador; AC of S, J-2, AC of S, J-3; and Chief, RDC Division, CORDS.

16. To support this committee and its chairman, and to conduct day-to-day business of ICEX at the Saigon level, an ICEX Staff reporting directly to Deputy for CORDS to COMUSMACV has been established. The intent of this is to make it possible for Deputy for CORDS to exercise operational control over all pertinent programs. It was determined that this should be a joint staff, with full integration of appropriate civilian and military components. The ICEX Staff has three elements: an Operations Group, a Reports Management Group, and an Intelligence Group.

a. The Operations Group is intended for the exercise of operational review and control. It includes at this time two

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Program Managers. One Program Manager (with three assistants) is intended to concern himself with intelligence coordination and with the generation and coordination of positive action operations. A second Program Manager (with two assistants) is intended to concern himself with the construction of detention centers for VC civil detainees, and also with the problem of judicial reform, to make possible a permanent neutralization of arrested Viet Cong. These Program Managers are continually to review all pertinent programs of all components, and to monitor their performance. They are to ensure that programs are properly supported by the respective components, ensure that proper and smooth coordination and integration are achieved and maintained, ensure that maximum utilization is made of all resources in a sharply focussed attack on the infrastructure, and to review, investigate and initiate corrective action in problem areas. The Program Manager concept is flexible, and if more prove necessary, for the solution of new problems, they can be added.

b. The Reports Management Group of the ICEX Staff is to develop a management reporting system, identifying information requirements for management control, designing an integrated reporting system; at a later stage it is to process the provincial and regional (Sector and Corps) reports for management presentation in Saigon. This management reporting system is to be developed in conjunction with other reports reform currently being undertaken in Saigon, and is to be related to ADP systems in development in MACV. The Reports Group of the ICEX Staff will, as noted, make systematic and stylized presentations, both narrative and statistical in nature, on a periodic basis, to the Inter-Agency Committee at Saigon, chaired by Deputy to COMUSMACV for CORDES. This presentation will highlight input factors, progress (or its absence), and problems requiring senior management attention.

c. The Intelligence Group (two officers) requires no explanation.

17. At Corps, the ICEX concept entails the designation of the CIA Regional Officer in Charge (ROIC) to the staff of the Corps Senior Advisor. This officer will coordinate and integrate, under the direction and authority of the Corps Senior Advisor, all programs relating to attack on the infrastructure, and will achieve a sharp focus of all pertinent components on the infrastructure collection, coordination and action programs.

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The Corps ICEX officer will additionally be charged with the responsibility for bringing about similar coordination and focus on the Vietnamese Corps level components.

18. At Sector (province), the ICEX concept entails the designation of an ICEX coordinator to the staff of the Province Senior Advisor, with a similar coordination, integration and focussing role, under the direction and authority of the Province Senior Advisor. The province ICEX coordinator will be either a CIA officer or a MACV Counterintelligence officer, as most suitable in a given province.

19. The province ICEX coordinator will additionally be responsible for organizing and operating District Operational Intelligence Coordinating Centers (DOICC) in selected districts. The DOICC is a combined Center in which all pertinent Vietnamese agencies are represented, as are American intelligence and counterintelligence elements. The purpose of the centers is to break down the lack of coordination between Vietnamese agencies, and provides rapid review and dissemination of information to reaction elements. Centers already in being have significantly reduced time delay in dissemination of information and have by this achievement already proven their usefulness.

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